



## U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release  
November 30, 2006

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### **U.S. Attorney, Maine Attorney General Announce Methamphetamine Awareness Day**

Portland, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby and Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe announced today the designation of November 30, 2006, as National Methamphetamine Awareness Day. National Meth Awareness Day is being sponsored by the Department of Justice in partnership with other federal, state and local entities in an effort to educate people about the dangers of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive drug that is easily manufactured by combining a variety of readily available products, including over-the-counter cold medications and other household items. The methamphetamine problem has been greatest in the western and rural central parts of the country but has become prevalent in the east. In May of this year, a methamphetamine lab was discovered in a Lewiston residence where a minor child was also residing. U.S. Attorney Silsby and Attorney General Rowe agree that the incident raised concerns about Maine's preparedness to deal with methamphetamine-related issues if the drug were to appear in Maine to the extent it has in western and central parts of the country.

The state's top prosecutors, Silsby and Rowe, have been working together since at least October 2005 to prevent a methamphetamine epidemic in Maine and to ensure that sufficient protocols exist to identify and treat children found in meth labs or other drug-endangered environments. In October 2005, Silsby and Rowe attended the New England U.S. Attorneys' regional meeting designated to address an increase in methamphetamine incidents in New England.

In 2005, Rowe championed a bill in the Maine Legislature aimed at preventing meth manufacturing. The new law requires that most pseudoephedrine, ephedrine and phenylpropanolamine products, the active ingredients in the cold medications commonly used to manufacture meth, be kept behind pharmacy counters. The Maine law also authorized

pharmacies and retailers to maintain logs and request proof of identification of people purchasing pseudoephedrine products. In March 2006, President Bush signed into law the "Combat Meth Act" which made maintaining logs and production of identification mandatory. The Maine law also enacted the Maine Meth Watch Program, which has made available numerous training forums for community groups, ranging from emergency first-responders and child welfare advocates to local code enforcement officers.

The U.S. Attorney's Office hosted a two-day Drug Endangered Children conference in June of this year that focused on methamphetamine. The conference was cosponsored by the Attorney General's Office and other federal, state and local agencies. Presenters from the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children spoke to about 140 participants from across the state about the dangers of meth use and manufacturing to children and the experience in other parts of the country. In October, the U.S. Attorney sponsored cross-trainings in Bangor and Portland at which representatives of the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency and Department of Health and Human Services shared their recently adopted protocols for addressing the needs of children found in meth labs and similar hazardous environments.

U.S. Attorney Silsby said she is pleased with the proactive steps Maine is taking to prevent meth from hitting Maine as it has other parts of the country. "Meth Awareness Day is simply one more way to continue in partnership with Attorney General Rowe our proactive efforts to increase education and prevent increased use and manufacturing of this devastating drug in Maine," she said. Silsby noted that the severe impact of this drug on the user, children and other people residing at or near a meth lab, as well as the environment from toxic chemicals often abandoned after a meth cook, make this drug uniquely hazardous.

Attorney General Rowe added, "Methamphetamine is the most devastating drug we have seen. We hope that raising awareness about the drug will inspire more people to join the fight against it."

The following agencies are also partners with the Department of Justice in National Meth Awareness Day: the U.S. Department of Labor; Office of National Drug Control Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, Fraternal Order of Police, National District Attorneys Association, National Association of Attorneys General, Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse Issues, American Council on Education, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, American College Health Association, Association of Fraternity Advisors, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Panhellenic Conference, National Sheriffs Association, and the National Organization for Victim Assistance.

For more information go to [www.usdoj.gov/methawareness/](http://www.usdoj.gov/methawareness/)

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